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SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION BASED ON THE STUDY "NUTRITION AND THE WAR--OPINIONS ABOUT FOOD, AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR BETTER NUTRITION" 1/

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Home Economists and others engaged in nutrition education will find in the attached publication, "Nutrition and the War," implications for teaching nutrition that offer a real challenge. To begin with, some effective methods of teaching nutrition are suggested.

Effective methods

1. Tie up nutrition teaching with daily food experiences which take place when selecting the noon lunch, when buying food, and when planning and preparing meals.
2. Provide and serve foods in the cafeteria or school lunchroom in a way to facilitate the choosing of a balanced meal.
3. Use situations--such as standing in line in the cafeteria, and buying groceries--for simple nutrition messages which may be read easily from charts or posters.
4. Select hours for group study of nutrition which are convenient for the group to be reached, and places where the group would naturally go.
5. Use a practical approach to the selection and preparation of foods--for example, simple nutritious dishes instead of "fancy" or impractical ones.
6. Take into consideration the interests and needs of the group to be taught--economic, social, and cultural.

1/ A Study made by the Program Surveys Division, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture 1943.

Further implications, important to individuals and groups planning and developing educational programs in nutrition, are listed under the four points below:

1. Eating habits are hard to change.

Many people are satisfied with the way they have always eaten.

- a. Recognize that long-established food patterns cannot be ignored.
- b. Study the food habits of groups--the economic, racial, social, and other factors which may have had a part in determining food habits.
- c. Recognize that basic meal patterns present an accepted and natural approach to problems relating to food practices.
- d. Introduce "new" foods along with familiar foods.
- e. Begin work with one or two food practices instead of trying to establish many new food practices.

2. Few people have information about "new" foods.

The adjustments which housewives have to make when using new and different foods in place of the more familiar foods which are scarce or rationed, indicate certain problems.

- a. Eliminate, through a positive educational program, food prejudices which have no foundation in fact.
- b. Interpret "new" foods in terms of the Basic 7 in order to develop an understanding of relative food values.
- c. Plan ways for showing homemakers simple methods of preparing foods.
- d. Provide tested recipes that can be duplicated so as to avoid the discouragement that results from failure.
- e. Become familiar with relative costs of foods which have similar food values.
- f. Encourage the production of foods for good nutrition--for example, in Victory Gardens.

3. Many people do not understand the concept of a balanced diet and of food values.

- a. Promote the concept of an adequate diet which can be secured through three daily meals.
- b. Translate the Basic 7 food groups into familiar terms to fit family food plans for meeting daily needs.
- c. Show how the Victory Garden can produce foods to supplement what is needed for family food plans.
- d. Build the educational program around the interests and responsibilities of individuals and groups. For instance, meal planning and food preparation are usually responsibilities of the housewife. In rural areas a man's knowledge of animal nutrition may be used in teaching human nutrition.
- e. Develop programs that reach various members of the family group--men, women, and children.
- f. Plan educational programs that reach different social and economic groups in the community.
- g. Analyze the reasons why knowledge is not put into practice. Studies show, for instance, that many informed people, especially women, do not eat an adequate breakfast.

4. The rationing of foods requires continuing interpretation.

Problems of securing an adequate diet are increased because of rationing. As shortages increase, substitutions that people make for scarce foods are likely to become nutritionally poorer. Home economists should continue to interpret rationing regulations and to show how to secure adequate diets under rationing.

- a. Give publicity to foods which may be substituted for scarce or rationed foods.
- b. Compare food values of unrationed foods with rationed foods within similar food groups.
- c. Interpret rationing regulations.

